



LINCOLN-LANCASTER WOMEN'S



# Commission Quarterly

Published by Friends of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission, Lincoln, Nebraska *Winter Issue January 2003*

## Annual Event Dons New Hat for International Women’s Day

A new tradition in Lincoln and Lancaster County is about to begin.

For the first time in its history, the Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s Commission, along with Friends of the Commission, will host a luncheon program for its annual awards presentation..

In recognition of **International Women’s Day**, the 27<sup>th</sup> annual awards program, “*Weaving Women’s Voices*,” is scheduled for Friday, March 7, 2003, at the Cornhusker Hotel. This event differs from previous years as the Commission has traditionally held evening programs to honor recipients of the Alice Paul, Erasmus Correll, Woman Artist and the Young Feminist of the Year awards.

“We are looking forward to having our first luncheon program to make it more accessible for those who support our endeavors,” said Bonnie Coffey, director of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s Commission.

The two-hour program, starting at 11:30 a.m., will highlight outstanding women and men who have made an impact professionally and personally in the community on women’s issues. Tickets are \$25 per person. Menu choices include Caesar salad, vegetables and pasta, and quiche.

Hosted by the Commission’s nonprofit organization, Friends of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s

Commission, a fundraiser will be conducted to raffle a homemade quilt and tapestry, created by Wendy Weiss, woven with quotes from women. Proceeds will support the Commission’s events and programs. Raffle ticket sales and program RSVP can be arranged by calling the Women’s Commission, 441-7716.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Preeta Bansal, a visiting professor at the University of Nebraska College of Law. Bansal, an Lincoln East High School valedictorian alumna who was born in India and immigrated with her family to Lincoln at the age of three, is a *magna cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Harvard-Radcliffe College.

She has argued cases before the United States Supreme Court, serving as Solicitor General for the State of New York and has been referred to by *The New York Times* as a “legal superstar” and “one of the most gifted lawyers of her generation.” She served as law clerk to several Supreme Court Justices and participated in drafting the “New Federalism” guidelines for the role of government and attorney generals nationwide.

Among her many travels, she went to India under the direction of former President Jimmy Carter to oversee India’s national elections. She served in the Clinton Administration as counselor in the U.S. Department of Justice and as Special Counsel in the Office of the

White House Counsel, where she focused on issues relating to youth violence and violence against women, and coordinated the United States’ agenda for the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing.

Bansal has been a regular speaker and lecturer on constitutional law issues in the United States and abroad, and has authored and co-authored pieces published in the *Harvard Law Review*, *Yale La Journal*, and *Villanova Law Review*, among other publications. In 1993, she traveled to India at the request of the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi to speak on intellectual property law issues, and in 1996, she traveled to Uganda at the request of the former U.S. Registrar for Copyrights to assist in drafting of that nation’s copyright laws.

She also is active in numerous community and social service activities. She volunteers at the soup kitchen, served as a life skills mentor to inner New York City children, and served on national boards of several nonprofit organizations.

## Female Athletes Selected for 7th Annual Awards Program

Six top female athletes and more than 50 Athletic Achievers have been slated for recognition at the 7<sup>th</sup> annual awards luncheon hosted by Girls & Women in Sports & Fitness (GWISF).

Held in honor of the national Women in Sports Week celebrated Feb. 1 through 7, 2003, the awards luncheon theme, “*Succeed in Sport - Lead in Life*,” will be held at the University of Nebraska Student Union, 14 and R Streets on Saturday, Feb. 1, 2003. Congratulations to the following winners:

- \*Ambassador Award - Debbie Sedlacek
- \*Courage Award - Abby Meyer
- \*Pioneer Award - Doris O'Donnell
- \*Mentor Award - Kristi Nelson-Hitz
- \*Youth Award - Leigh Sutton
- \*Spirit Award - Kristin Carney

Starting at 11:30 a.m., the awards luncheon will feature keynote speaker Athena Yiamouyiannis, executive director for the National Association for Girls and Women in Sports (NAGWS). Working in the field of advocating and lobbying for Title IX, she is dedicated to promoting gender equality on and off the playing field.

Reservations can be made through January 28. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Vicki Highstreet, UNL Campus Rec, 472-4771.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Celebrate Women’s History Month in March

Know of any “good” women to talk about during the month of March? Women who made scientific discoveries? Created fair laws? Started million-dollar companies? Changed the way employers treated factory workers during the depression? Or flew to the moon?

If so, start talking. Others need to know.

March is that time of year set aside to celebrate women’s achievements in the home, school and workplace. Libraries set up book displays dedicated to women authors. Teachers assign research papers on women inventors and engineers. Service clubs host guest speakers to share stories about women’s impact

on society. The community is busy with a wide variety of activities designed to bring awareness to women’s role in history.

Plan an activity with your family and friends. Watch “Norma Rae,” a true story starring Sally Fields and directed by Penny Marshal. Volunteer to be a reader for a children’s story hour at the local bookstore and highlight famous women. Watch Oxygen on cable television, a station devoted to women. Participate in a genealogy research project and call family members to glean new stories about your female ancestors.

Whatever the activity, celebrate Women’s History Month!



## Weaving Women’s Voices International Women’s Day Celebration

☐ Yes, we would like to be a **Community Partner** in the 2003 International Women’s Day luncheon! Enclosed is our check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the level indicated below: (please circle)

☆ Red	\$2,500	☆ Table	\$250
☆ White	\$1,000	☆ Friend	\$ 25
☆ Blue	\$ 500		

☐ Yes, I would like to attend Lincoln’s premier **International Women’s Day** celebration. Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ ticket(s) @ \$25 each. Enclosed is my check or money order for \$\_\_\_\_\_.

☐ I’d like to go, but have a scheduling conflict. In my place, please provide the opportunity for low income women and students to learn more about the advancement of women and women’s issues during this special event. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ to set aside for **Scholarship** tickets.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Company: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Day Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax No: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Return this form in the self-addressed enclosed envelope or mail your reservation information and payment to: **FRIENDS of LLWC**, PO Box 81454, Lincoln NE 68501-1454.

\*\*All donations are tax deductible as allowed under IRS Section 170. Net proceeds to benefit the projects and programs of Friends of LLWC and the Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s Commission. Confirmations and/or donations must be received in LLWC offices by **February 15, 2003**, to be included into print materials.



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# Women's Commission - Winter Quarterly Focus

## Succeed in Sport - Lead in Life, Awards Program Set for February

Continued from front page

Being a serious "shagger" for the Nebraska Men's Basketball team doesn't steal time away from **Abby Meyer's** other interests, such as taking private tennis and piano lessons or playing percussion in the Lux Middle School's jazz band. The honor roll student is seen as an excellent role model in gym class and her mentors agree that she never gives up - regardless of how painful it is. Meyer, who was born with missing fingers on her hands, wears a prosthesis on the right leg and a brace on the left. Her parents, Lisa and Rick Meyer, look at their daughter as a heroine because of her day-to-day **courage** in facing the uphill climb to success.

**Kristin Carney** understands the meaning of pain, physically and emotionally. The Waverly High School senior suffered a severe knee injury in her junior year during an indoor soccer game. Extensive surgery and hours of painful rehabilitation were necessary to get her back into shape and return to the field for one more year. Although Carney remained close to her supportive parents, they were employed in different states and couldn't be accessible on a daily basis. But Carney had real athletic **spirit** and was determined to pursue her goals. Her comeback resulted in setting seven new school records, winning the Eastern Midlands Conference and becoming the medalist at the state meet for Class B and setting a new all-class 18-hole score record with a round of 72.

Goals keep **Debbie Sedlacek** focused on her job of molding and instructing women and girls in the sport of Dressage - a particular equestrian riding technique where the horse and the rider become one in thought and movement. Sedlacek, a Nebraska Dressage Association Board member and Madonna volunteer, provides equestrian opportunities in recreational events, Cornhusker State Games, and other competitive meets for women of all ages. She is an excellent **ambassador**, who remains focused and compassionate, respecting each rider's hardworking efforts and developing them into full potential.

Lincoln High School Coach **Kristi Nelson-Hitz** is an excellent **mentor** with female athletes. Recently completing her 13<sup>th</sup> year as head volleyball coach, she has compiled more than 200 wins, her teams have finished seasons ranked in the top ten seven times, and had 25 all-conference players and



12 all-state honorees. Winning teams and excellent female athletes come from outstanding coaching, and Nelson-Hitz motivates her students to exceed self-imposed limitations. She helps her students understand the relationship between succeeding on the court and succeeding in life. Her dedication to fitness combined with the ability to connect with youth makes her an exceptional and supportive coach.

As a member of the Pius X Golf Team, **Leigh Sutton**, an honor roll student and selected as "Outstanding Sophomore English Student", has shown considerable dedication to improving her game on the fairway. She has won District Honors each year and has always placed in the top 5 at every competition, winning a majority of golf competitions. Selected as the Nebraska Golf Association's Girl Junior Golfer of the Year 2002, she heads up a winning list of achievements as a **Star City** youth athlete.

Conversely, **Doris O'Donnell** has been professionally and personally active in sports most of her life. The Professor Emeritus at the University of Nebraska taught physical education and coached field hockey and women's basketball during the time when our society was trying to define women's role in sports, leadership, teamwork, and athletic success. O'Donnell was a **pioneer** who blazed the trail for other women moving into the coaching and teaching arenas during the mid 1970's when Title IX was a passing thought. She naturally became a role model and mentor to many women who made sports a profession.

### "Succeed in Sport - Lead in Life"

Saturday, February 1, 2003

11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

University of Nebraska Student Union  
Centennial Ballroom, 14th and R streets

Tickets: \$10

## GWISF Keynote Speaker Addresses Title IX

Keynote speaker for the 7th annual Girls & Women in Sports & Fitness will be Ms. Athena Yiamouyiannis, the executive director for the National Association for Girls and Women in Sport (NAGWS).



Athena  
Yiamouyiannis

She is an expert on Title IX and gender equity issues. She has served as an advisor and spokesperson about equity issues on and off the playing fields for colleges, universities, conferences and national organizations. She has addressed the NCAA Coaches Education Summit, NYLC Title IX Debates, NACWAA Fall Forum, Southern Association for Women in Physical Activity and Sport Convention, Bush Administration's Chicago

Title IX Hearing, Mt. Holyoke College and Equity in Sport Symposium.

Prior to NAGWS, Athena worked for ten years at the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) as its director of membership services. She also supervised the NCAA rules, education program and served as liaison to the NCAA's Committee on Women's Athletics.

She has served on the board of directors for the National Association for Collegiate Women Athletics

*"It's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness."*

*- Eleanor Roosevelt*

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Our voices can tell Congress who we are and what we believe. Now is the time to use the power of our voices. Be a part of the Responsible Choices Action Network.

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### Commission Quarterly Newsletter

The Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission (LLWC) is an Advisory Board created by elected officials to advise the Mayor, Lincoln City Council and Lancaster County Board on issues that impact women. Please address any correspondence to: Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission, 440 S. 8th St., Ste. 100, Lincoln NE 68508-2294 or call (402) 441-7716.

#### Editorial Policy:

The Commission Quarterly is a publication of Friends of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission. Publishing costs are paid by Friends. Materials appearing in this publication shall be in accordance with the purposes, goals and official positions of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission and Friends of the Women's Commission. The Commission Quarterly is published four times a year: January, April, July and October.

#### Criteria for Publication:

Submission by community groups and individuals are welcome. Deadlines are the first of the month preceding the month of publication. Articles are subject to editing, with the author's compliance. Specific opinions expressed are not necessarily the opinions held by LLWC employees, its Commissioners or Friends of the Women's Commission.

#### Advertising

Advertising is available in a business card sized ad and will be accepted as space is available on a first come, first serve basis. All ads should be camera ready and must be submitted one month before the publication date. For more information on advertising opportunities, call 441-7717.

#### Friends of the Commission

Friends of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission is a 501 (c)(3) organization that solicits funds for the commission's projects.

#### LLWC Staff

Karen Wamsley, office specialist; Diane Mullins, public information specialist, and Bonnie Coffey, director.

#### Friends Executive Board

Marcia Kushner, president; Georgia Glass, treasurer; Karen Dienstbier, secretary and Beatty Brasch, immediate past president.

#### CQ Committee

Bonnie Coffey and Diane Mullins.

#### LLWC Commissioners

Gail Anderson, Dr. Mary Beck, president; Holly Burns, member-at-large; Brenda Christensen, Dr. Gwendolyn M. Combs, Helen Fagan, member-at-large; Renee Geller, Jennifer Gutierrez, Nancy Intermill, vice-president; Dr. Verita Kelley, Maria Medrano-Nehls, Colleen Ozanne, Nicole Simon, Roberta Stick, past president, and Kathleen Uhrmacher.

**WHEN YOU NEED A FRIEND,  
JUST CALL ON ME!**



**Become a Friends member and support the  
Commission. Send your tax deductible  
donation to:**

**Friends of the Commission  
PO Box 81454  
Lincoln NE 68501-1454**

**FRIENDS  
MEMBERSHIP DRIVE  
January is renewal time!**

**Forget to renew?  
No problem!  
Just snap your fingers,  
and pick up a pen.  
Grab a stamp  
and envelope to send.  
You can help support the  
programs of LLWC.**





# Women’s Commission – Winter Quarterly Focus

## Be Your Own Boss

The Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s Commission television show, *WomenTalk*, will focus on women business owners during the months of February and March. Special guests for this program, **Be Your Own Boss: Starting A Business**, includes Sarah Gauger, co-owner of One More Time Clothing and Sarah’s Bridal Shop, and Bonnie Ehlert, owner of Good Memories.



Gauger has operated the consignment shop at 1725 Van Dorn for more than two decades with her mother, Jan Gauger. Ehlert started a new business last year in the Piedmont Shopping Center on South Cotner Blvd.

LLWC Commissioner Nancy Intermill joins LLWC Director Bonnie Coffey in co-moderating this special show designed to inform women on the skills needed to become an entrepreneur.

## International Women’s Day Founded Nearly a Century Ago

Around the world, International Women’s Day (IWD) marks a celebration of the economic, social, cultural and political achievements for women.

An international celebration of education and empowerment, the first IWD was held on March 19, 1911 in Germany, Austria, Denmark and other European countries. German women selected this date in observation of the Prussian king in 1848 who had promised the vote to women. Subsequently over one million leaflets calling for action on the right to vote were distributed throughout Germany before IWD in 1911.

Now, IWD is always celebrated on March 8th and it’s an occasion marked by women’s groups around the world. This date is also commemorated at the United Nations and is designated in many countries as a national holiday. Women in every country, often divided by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate this important date that represents equality, justice, peace and development.

International Women’s Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history; it is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women seeking to participate equally in society on an equal footing with men. In ancient Greece, Lysistrata initiated a sexual strike against men in order to end war; during the French Revolution, Parisian women calling for “liberty, equality, fraternity” marched on Versailles to demand women’s suffrage.

The idea of an International Women’s Day first arose at the turn of the century, which in the industrialized world was a period of expansion and turbulence, booming population growth and radical ideologies. Until women are fully represented at senior leadership levels of public, professional and economic life, women do not have equal rights nor an equal voice.

The growing international women’s movement has helped make IWD a special day for promoting women’s rights and participation in political and economic processes. Increasingly, International Women’s Day is a time to reflect on the progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of women’s rights.

### CALENDAR ITEMS

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are held in the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission conference room at the K Street Complex, 440 South 8th Street, Ste. 100, Lincoln, NE, 68508-2294, Phone 441-7716.

#### FEBRUARY

*\*Black History Month*

- 1: Girls & Women in Sports & Fitness 7th annual awards luncheon: **Succeed in Sport - Lead in Life.**
- 12: Regular Committee Meetings, 5:45 p.m., LLWC
- 17: PRESIDENT’S DAY - Office Closed

#### MARCH

*\*Women’s History Month*

- 7: International Women’s Day 27th annual awards: **Weaving Women’s Voices**, 11:30 a.m.
- 12: Regular Committee Meetings, 5:45 p.m., LLWC
- 13: WomenTalk Taping: **Worth More Than We Earn-Pay Equity for Women.**
- 31: Spring Commission Quarterly distributed.

## The History Behind Black History Month in February

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as "Negro History Week" and later as "Black History Month." Black history was in the early stages of documentation and study when the tradition was born. Although Blacks have been in America at least as far back as colonial times, it was not until the 20th century that they gained a respectable presence in the history books. The celebration of Black History Month, and more importantly, the study of black history is the work of Dr. Carter G. Woodson.

Born to parents who were former slaves, he spent his childhood working in the Kentucky coal mines and enrolled in high school at age twenty. He graduated within two years and later went on to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard. The scholar was disturbed to find in his studies that history books largely ignored the Black American population.

Woodson decided to take on the challenge of writing Black Americans into the nation's history. He established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (now called the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History) in 1915, and a year later founded the widely respected Journal of Negro History. In 1926, he launched Negro History Week as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of Black people throughout American history.

## Simon Receives Volunteer Award

LLWC Commissioner Nicole Simon was honored with the County-City Volunteer of the Month Award presented at January’s County Commission meeting. Simon’s volunteer efforts include working with the Girls & Women in Sports & Fitness planning committee, Early Childhood Development/C-SIP and LLWC annual events. She has participated as a host on a WomenTalk television show and attended many LLWC functions.

## Beck Receives Feminist Award

President of the Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s Commission, Dr. Mary Beck, recently received the 2002 Feminist of the Year Award present by the National Organization of Women’s Lincoln Chapter for her work in gender equality in the workplace and health reproductive rights at the University of Nebraska.

## Scholarships Open for Women

Every year the **Jeannette Rankin Foundation** (JRF) awards scholarships to women 35 years of age and older who, through undergraduate or vocational education, are seeking to better themselves, their families and their communities. All applicants for this scholarship must be: Women at least 35 years of age as of April 1, 2003; a U.S. citizen; pursuing a technical or vocational degree, an associate degree, or a first bachelor degree; enrolled or accepted in an accredited school for the fall of 2003; of low-income according to federal guidelines. The deadline to apply is March 1, 2003. To find the exact income guidelines for this program, or to apply, go to: [www.rankinfoundation.org/apply.htm](http://www.rankinfoundation.org/apply.htm).

*“Who, I ask you, can take, dare take, on himself the rights, the duties, the responsibilities of another human soul?”*

*-- Elizabeth Cady Stanton*



## President’s Letter

By Dr. Mary Beck, LLWC President

As an advisory board, the Lincoln-Lancaster Women’s Commission seeks to keep its hand on the pulse of 51% of the population - the women in Lincoln and Lancaster County. Not an easy task with fifteen volunteer commissioners and a staff of only three.

This year, one of our more significant projects was **Women’s Voices: Finding Solutions**. Based on a similar model from the New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women, a questionnaire was adapted and distributed in the community; in addition to English, the questionnaire was also distributed in Spanish, Arabic, and Vietnamese versions. Contacts in the various communities helped with the distribution of over 4,500 of these questionnaires in Lincoln and Lancaster County and we received a respectable 13.5% return rate.

What we discovered through these *Women’s Voices* was, if not surprising, certainly confirming. The overwhelming concern of women in our community who responded is health care – more specifically, the **cost** of health care. Issues of employment (inadequate wages is a dominant theme) and childcare (expense is the primary concern) closely follow the health care issue.

One of the more interesting sections of the final report issued in January contains written comments women offered on the questionnaires. These personal vignettes give substance to the report, and help to place a very human face on the numbers collected. Every comment provided by participating women is included in the final report.

*Women’s Voices* does not offer plans or solutions to address the concerns these women have; our resources and finances preclude that. The final report does, however, reconfirm the lingering fact that events and economic realities continue to disproportionately and adversely impact women. It indicates, for example, a looming increased dependency on the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department for pressing health needs that are not elsewhere funded through health insurance. The very real possibility exists that many women will not seek health care for their own needs or those of their children because it is economically impossible for them.

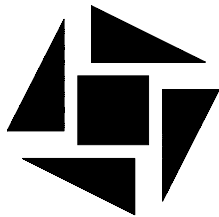
What will these decisions portend? Will health conditions become so pressing that they are forced to seek emergency care for which they will never be able to pay? Will their children be disadvantaged by health conditions that go untreated?

The results printed in the final report of *Women’s Voices* warrant review and attention.

These women’s voices should not go unheard, nor should we – having heard them – fail to seek solutions.

## Bust Sexual Assault Myths

For as many advancements as our culture has made in the areas of technology, science, medicine and human behavior, it’s difficult to believe that society still harbors old myths that taint the perceptions of human sexuality.



**Myth:** Rape really doesn’t happen very often. There are very few women who have experienced sexual assault.

**Truth:** The Federal Bureau of Investigation states that rape is the “fastest growing violent crime” in the nation. The FBI also estimated that the actual number of sexual assaults is 10 to 1000 times more than the number of reported sexual assaults.

According to the FBI’s Crime Clock, one forcible rape occurred every 5.8 minutes and one is six U.S. women have been victims of a completed or attempted rape. Nearly 28% of all rapes are committed by boyfriends, 35% by acquaintances, and 5% by other relatives. Strangers are responsible for one in five rapes.

What does this really mean? The next time you find yourself conversing about sexual assault stories at a party, family gathering or near the office coffee pot, speak up. It’s never too late to be a myth-buster. The person you tell might end up as a juror on a sexual assault case someday.

(Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, US Department of Justice. 1996. *National Crime Victimization Survey and 1994 Violence Against Women report.*)





## Business and the Working Woman

### Executive Women's Behavior Changes Up the Career Ladder

According to The Leader's Edge Research (TM) team who recently conducted a nationwide study of Fortune 500 company executives to develop a profile of senior executive women, women's professional behaviors seem to change once on top of the career ladder.

The purpose of the research was to determine the styles and strategies of the most successful women in business and to see how they contrast with senior executive men, as well as more junior executives.

"What emerged from the study was a compelling portrait which reveals striking behavioral differences with male counterparts and more junior women in a number of key areas including networking, self-promotion and communication style," according to Molly Shepard, founder of The Leader's Edge firm. "The research shows that the senior executive women are less assertive, more formal, and more risk averse than their male counterparts and more junior executives. They network less, are more dependent on promotion from within their company; and under-utilized their mentors, using them for protection rather than for obtaining top assignments."

The sample consisted of 341 executives with salaries of \$100,000 and above who were contacted through direct mail and email. The research indicates that senior executive women do not make effective use of networking to advance their careers. While networking skills increase in importance for males, they decrease for women as they move up the ladder, with only 65.9% of senior executive woman versus 75.3% of senior executive men rating networking skills as important.

Although self-promotion skills are reported as important factors by 72.6% of the more junior females, they decrease significantly to 50% for women at the highest levels, suggesting that women may not be taking advantage of self-promotion as they rise in an organization.

While women at all levels have a less assertive communication style in meetings than men, women are dramatically less confrontational at the highest levels. Only 69.4% of senior women versus 82.4% of senior men responded that they "like to challenge thinking." Women may feel "at risk" and therefore temper assertiveness as they are promoted.

The importance of reputation increases for senior executive women and is significantly higher than for their male counterparts. Over 95% of the most senior women cite reputation as an important factor in reaching their current position, which would indicate that they are less likely to take risks which may prove damaging.

A large percentage (79.4%) of women at the highest level utilized mentors as protective allies, rather than actively using them for help in obtaining assignments and gaining visibility. This implies a possible underutilization of mentors by high level women.

Recognition is consistently more important for women than for men and the importance of this factor increases to 81.4% in the highest level women, suggesting that career success is gauged less by money and promotion and more by how they are perceived.

As they rise in the organization, women become increasingly reliant on formal meetings for influencing senior management (15.3% for more junior women versus 28.4%), indicating that they rely on scheduled meetings with superiors, rather than informal interactions on or off the job.

Women at all levels were much more dependent on promotion from within the company than are men, with the largest contrast between top men (35.1%) and top women (51.8%). This tendency for some women to stay with their current companies to get ahead correlates with less active use of networking and mentoring.

### Survey Results Show What Concerns Women the Most

Recently released, the *Women's Voices: Finding Solutions* comprehensive special report indicates the major concern for most of the women in the community is health care. The yearlong survey was conducted by the Lincoln-Lancaster Women's Commission in response to its mandate to keep elected officials informed on issues impacting women.

In summary, the respondent was a middle-aged, white, married professional who had some college education, worked full time and resided in southeast Lincoln. There were 796 women who participated in the yearlong study and voted for "what concerned" them the most. Many of them also added written comments relative to the issues at hand.

The majority of *Women's Voices* (69%) indicated that health care costs (39%) was a major concern for them and their families. From prescription drugs to medical visits to monthly premium payments and larger co-pays with less policy coverage, concerns about insurance coverage ranked second (27%) from the top. The demographic study showed that 72% of the women were covered by some type of insurance plan with the majority being employer related. Conversely and sadly, seven percent indicated they had no insurance coverage and couldn't afford satisfactory health care. Four percent of children also had no health insurance coverage.

Domestic violence remains a top priority concern according to *Women's Voices* (58%) respondents who felt emotional abuse (27%), child abuse (26%) and physical abuse (24%) lacked the necessary support systems (shelters, funding and programs) needed to educate, reform and promote a safer living environment within our community.

Another major concern among Lincoln and Lancaster County women was employment and wages. The vast majority of voices (57%) agreed that wages are too low (42%) and underemployment is a real problem. With regards to quality jobs, Lincoln doesn't compare well to other markets in other states. Many hurdles exist for the single parent and low-income parents who must hold two or more jobs in order to meet their monthly financial obligations and cost of living needs. Some women indicated they lacked the necessary education level or skills required (8%) to move up the economic ladder.

Education is a priority concern (54%) as women indicated the cost (27%) and quality (23%) of the education as a barrier to completing goals. Some women stated that getting a higher education was a privilege only for the wealthy while others lamented

over their child's homework assignments conflicting parent's work schedules, outside family activities, and other responsibilities.

Not surprisingly, *Women's Voices* tied with regards to family and housing (52%) issues.

Affordability (41%) and quality (16%) of housing are two major concerns. Under current economics and credit rating systems, home ownership is either very difficult or not an option if you are a single parent and/or of low income. Those women who can afford to own a home indicated the high cost of taxes, maintenance and utilities consumed too much of their monthly budget, putting a financial stressor on their pocketbooks.

Parenting issues, relationship-building and community activities are of moderate concern to many women. Single parenting (20%) support and a need for youth activities (18%) reflect a lack of community support systems and partnership programs.

Discrimination and child care tied (51%) as moderate concerns.

Many women indicated that they deal with some form of discrimination in their daily lives, ranging from obesity to hate crimes to age to religion. The two highest issues were sexism (25%) and racism (23%).

Child care issues, including cost (30%) and quality (28%), remain a constant concern with working mothers. Nebraska's working mothers ranked second in the nation as the largest female workforce with children living in the household in 2000.

Items ranked of marginal concern, but of great importance, were substance abuse (40%), sexual assault (34%) and

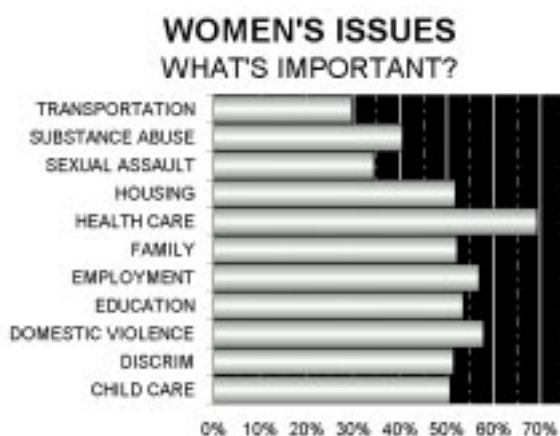
transportation (29%).

Drugs (26%) and alcohol (22%) abuse issues continue to be a challenge faced by family members, young adults and public health systems. There is no or little assistance available to the uninsured, and some women believe that the "college-town atmosphere" allows such abuses to be socially acceptable.

Sexual harassment (19%) and rape (13%) incidents were named as the two top concerns of sexual assault issues. Difficulty in reporting the crime, going to court and getting a conviction continues to be the major hurdle in thwarting the number of sexual assault incidents occurring in the community.

*Women's Voices* indicated the lack of adequate public transit system (16%) affected their mobility in accessing employment, education and health care resources.

To receive a detailed copy of this report, contact the Women's Commission, 441-7716.



## News Flash

### Welcome New Officers

Welcome new 2002/2003 officers: Dr. Mary Beck, president; Nancy Intermill, vice president; and members-at-large are Holly Burns and Helen Fagan.

### Welcome New Commissioners

Recently appointed by Mayor Don Wesely, the following volunteers have been approved as members of the Commission:

\*Dr. Gwendolyn M. Combs, assistant professor in business management at the University of Nebraska

\*Jennifer Gutierrez, a stay-at-home mother, owns and operates JAG Communications Consulting Firm.

\*Dr. Venita Kelley, a professor at Doane College Lincoln campus.

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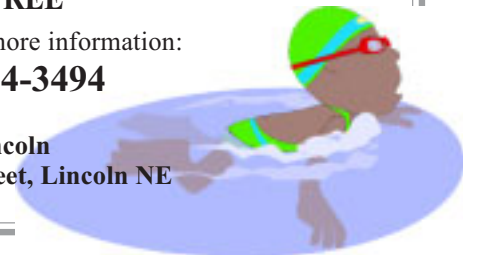
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